

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 05243 231622Z

ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9933

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMCONSUL BUKAVU POUCH

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 5243

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP CG FR BE

SUBJ: MOBUTU CRITICIZES BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SIMONET

REF:KINSHASA 5140

1. MAY 23 ISSUE OF ELIMA HEADLINES ATTACK ON THE BELGIAN FONMIN
BY MOBUTU, WHO HAS ORDERED ALL ZAIRIAN DIPLOMATS TO CEASE
CONTACT WITH SIMONET. ALREADY CRITICIZED YESTERDAY FOR HIS "EQUIVOCAL
"

ATTITUDE TOWARD ZAIRE (REFTEL), SIMONET HAS NOW BEEN TAKEN TO TASK
FOR:

--"BLUSTERING AND DISCOURTEOUS" DECLARATIONS SINCE THE
OUTBREAK OF THE SECOND SHABA WAR;

--CLAIMING THAT THE BELGIAN RATHER THAN FAZ RETOOK KOLWEZI'S
AIRPORT;

--CHARACTERIZING ZAIRE'S REQUEST FOR AID TO REPULSE THE IN-
VADERS AS "IMPRECISE," THEREBY HOLDING IT UP IN HIS MINISTRY
FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE PASSING IT ON TO THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE,
WHILE US, FRANCE, MOROCCO, SAUDI ARABIA, IVORY COAST, SENEGAL,
GABON, TOGO, AND "MANY OTHERS" UNDERSTOOD IMMEDIATELY WHAT
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PAGE 02 KINSHA 05243 231622Z

WAS NEEDED.;

--SUGGESTING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE FLNC TO AVOID A MASSACRE
IN KOLWEZI, THEREBY UNPARDONABLY ACCORDING THE REBELS DE FACTO
RECOGNITION;

--CONTRIBUTING TO BELGIUM'S DECISION NOT TO SHARE WITH THE FRENCH
THE BURDEN OF REESTABLISHING ORDER IN KOLWEZI.

2. DEVELOPING THIS LAST POINT, MOBUTU STRESSED THE IMBALANCE BETWEEN THE BENEFITS FROM SHABA'S MINES RECEIVED RESPECTIVELY BY BELGIUM AND FRANCE, AND THEIR RESPECTIVE UNDERTAKINGS DURING THE CURRENT CRISIS. TO TAKE SIMONET LITERALLY, ARGUED MOBUTU, WOULD BE TO REPLACE THE 5,000 HIGHLY SKILLED BELGIAN ENGINEERS AND TECHNICIANS WITH FRENCHMEN "SINCE IT IS THE FRENCH WHO ARE DYING IN KOLWEZI." "BUT WE WOULD NOT GO THAT FAR," SPECIFIED MOBUTU, "BECAUSE WE BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE OF BELGIAN-ZAIRIAN COOPERATION, WHILE MINISTER SIMONET SUSTAINS AMBIGUITY."

3. THE ARTICLE CONCLUDES WITH MOBUTU'S CRITICISM OF SIMONET'S STATEMENT THAT ONE PURPOSE OF HIS FORTHCOMING TRIP TO ANGOLA IS TO ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT BETWEEN ZAIRE AND ANGOLA. ELIMA PARAPHRASES MOBUTU'S WORDS AS FOLLOWS: "IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WHOEVER TRIED TO BRING LUANDA AND KINSHASA CLOSER TOGETHER WOULD BE CONSIDERED A 'PROVACATEUR' BY ZAIRE."

4. COMMENT: MOBUTU WAS CAREFUL TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE BELGIAN KING AND THE PRIME MINISTER ON ONE HAND, WITH WHOM HE CLAIMS EXCELLENT RELATIONS, AND SIMONET ON OTHER HAND. HE NEVERTHESS HAS BRANDISHED THE THREAT OF REPLACING BELGIAN WITH FRENCH INTERESTS AT GECAMINES, A CHANGE WHICH MANY BELGIANS HERE ASSUME WILL BE FRANCE'S PRICE FOR KEEPING HER TROOPS IN SHABA.

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PAGE 03 KINSHA 05243 231622Z

5. BELGIAN EMBASSY INFORMS US THAT BELGIAN AMB RITTWEGER DE MORR MADE STRENUOUS ATTEMPTS TO SEE MOBUTU ON MAY 22 IN ORDER TO OBTAIN EXPLANATION FOR THE ATTACK AGAINST SIMONET. HE FINALLY SUCCEEDED IN REACHING MOBUTU AT THE AIRPORT AS THE PRESIDENT WAS ABOUT TO DEPART FOR PARIS. THEIR DISCUSSION WAS NOT PRIVATE. MOBUTU ASSURED HIM THAT THE DENUNCIATION WAS DIRECTED ONLY AGAINST ONE INDIVIDUAL (SIMONET) AND NOT AGAINST THE BELGIAN GOVT OR THE BELGIAN PEOPLE, WHOM HE LOVED DEARLY. ACCORDING TO OUR BELGIAN EMBASSY SOURCE, HOWEVER, MANY PREVIOUS UNDECIDED BELGIANS HAVE BEEN CONVINCED BY MOBUTU'S REMARKS TO LEAVE ZAIRE.

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